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On the Sight-Seeing Car



Ernest M. Gould

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On the Sight-Seeing Car

A Comedy Sketch in One Act

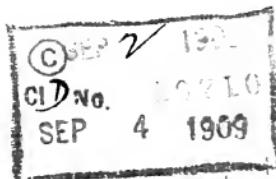
BY

ERNEST M. GOULD



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On the Sight-Seeing Car

CHARACTERS

SUPERINTENDENT,	who needs help.
BILL, }	who need money.
DAN, }	
A TRAMP,	who pays fare with fire.
A JEW,	who thinks one car is as good as another.
A FARMER,	who is particular about change.
A CRIPPLE,	who was a big man once.
A FAT LADY,	who can't ride.
A FAIR LADY,	who is a lady fare.

NOTE.—All the parts may easily be taken by males; by doubling, the sketch can be easily given by four males, or three males and one female.

TIME IN PLAYING: Forty-five minutes.

COSTUMES

SUPERINTENDENT, BILL and DAN, ordinary street dress.
The TRAMP, JEW and FARMER, burlesque costumes. JEW wears long coat.

The FAT LADY should be very gaily dressed.

The FAIR LADY wears an elaborate gown, with train, if possible; carries parasol, chatelaine bag, etc. She should wear striped stockings.

PROPERTIES

Paper for SUPERINTENDENT. Very little coat for DAN; very large one for BILL; candle for BILL. Horse's straw bonnet. Pair automobile goggles. Megaphone. Two tape measures in metal cases (the sort that are pulled out and recoil in the case by a spring when released). Cigar for TRAMP. Trick cigar for TRAMP to give BILL (it contains a small firecracker). Cane and transfer ticket for JEW. Money for FAIR LADY and FARMER. Firecrackers for BILL. Crutches for CRIPPLE.

NOTE.—Although an automobile is called for in this play, it is not at all necessary that a real machine be used. Only one side of the machine will show, and that at no time requires to be moved. A structure to represent this one side of an automobile can be easily made out of boards, pasteboard or even paper, and boxes, chairs or boards arranged behind same to give the effect of the seats and other unseen parts. On this structure are painted wheels, tires, etc., so that to the audience it appears as a real machine, or a burlesque of a real machine. A sign on the side of car reads, "Sight-Seeing Car." When BILL puts his candle near the gasoline there should be an explosion. A very effective and safe way to manage this is to have a bunch of large firecrackers near a deep can (a milk can serves very well). BILL lights the fuse and drops the erackers into the can. The can is inside the car, behind the pasteboard front, and cannot be seen by the audience.

On the Sight-Seeing Car

SCENE.—*Any square in any city. Automobile in background. A bench like a public park seat stands either R. or L. Curtain discloses SUPERINTENDENT, holding paper in hand.*

SUPT. Well, wouldn't that jar you? This puts me in an awful fix. Here's a beautiful day, and there ought to be great business this morning. And here I find our best machine deserted, with this notice (*holds up paper*) tacked up on her, telling me there's a strike on. You can't run a sight-seeing automobile without a chauffeur and conductor. This car must run to-day, that's sure; but how can I manage it? I stand to lose about fifty dollars if the car doesn't run, and just at this stage of the game I can't afford to lose fifty cents. If I could only get a couple of fellows to run this car just for to-day.

(Enter BILL and DAN, r.)

BILL. Hully gee, Dan, but I'm hungry. Where can we get a bite to eat?

DAN. Hungry? Didn't you lick the sweat off the restaurant window this morning?

SUPT. (aside). Perhaps I can use these two fellows. (Aloud.) What are you fellows doing around here?

BILL. Oh, nothing—just strolling about for our health. Lovely morning, isn't it?

DAN. We are taking our usual morning walk. Charming weather we're having.

SUPT. Say, you fellows, do you want a job?—Are you looking for work?

BILL. Not if we can get anything else to do.

SUPT. Well, perhaps I can give you something to do. But first I must know what experience you have had. Where did you work last?

BILL. Dan, he wants to know where you worked last.

DAN. No, he was talking to you.

BILL. Oh, I only had a light job.

SUPT. What did you do?

BILL. I shoveled smoke in a feather foundry.

SUPT. Shoveled smoke in a feather foundry? I should say that was a light job. (*Turning to DAN.*) What did you do?

DAN. I worked in a chow-chow factory.

SUPT. In a chow-chow factory? What did you do in a chow-chow factory?

DAN. I shaved the warts off the pickles.

SUPT. Want a situation? Are you married?

BILL. Is my clothes tore?

DAN. Any buttons off?

BILL. } No, we ain't married.

DAN. }

BILL (*to DAN.*) Dan, you came pretty near getting married.

SUPT. How near?

BILL. He asked a girl to marry him and she said no.

SUPT. Do you fellows know anything about an auto?

BILL. } Oh, yes, we know all we ought to.

DAN. }

BILL (*with very important air*). I took one apart once and put it together again, and when I got through I had four or five pieces left over.

DAN. I bought some gasoline for a man who owned one once.

SUPT. Did you ever run one?

BILL. Yes, and got run in, too.

SUPT. What would you do if you were running a machine and couldn't stop it?

DAN. I'd run it into a thick, quick, brick wall.

SUPT. What would you do if you were running a machine and it broke down, far, far from a garage?

DAN (*mocking SUPT.*). Far, far from a garage.

BILL. If the intake got taken in I would take it out agin.

DAN. If the crank shaft got cranky I would "slap it on the wrist."

BILL. If the exhaust got exhausted I would give it a drink.

SUPT. Well, you see I have this auto here which is to

take strangers around the city. I want one of you to run the machine and the other to stand on the back and explain to the strangers the points of interest as you go along, and I think you fellows will do first rate. By the way, do you know anything about —— (*name of town where play is given*)?

DAN. } Oh, yes, we know all about this town.
BILL. }

DAN. We used to sleep on the common (*or name some park or public square*).

SUPT. Well, let me see how much you know about it? What is the principal street in ——?

BILL. (*Names a small street.*)

SUPT. What are some of the principal buildings?

DAN. (*Names the best-known jail.*)

BILL. (*Names a police-station, jail, or amusement park.*)

SUPT. Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you each two-fifty per day if you will run this car for me.

BILL. No, sir! Not us. We'll have you understand that we work for nothing but union wages, sir; nothing but union wages.

SUPT. (*aside*). That's hard luck, but I must have some one to run the machine. (*To BILL.*) So you must have union wages, hey? Well, how much will you work for?

BILL. We want \$1.25 per day, and we won't work for a cent less; not one cent less.

SUPT. All right; I'll give you each \$1.25 per day.

BILL (*to DAN*). See, I got your pay raised right away.

SUPT. Where do you fellows live?

BILL (*to DAN*). The man wants to know where you live at.

DAN. He asked you where you lived.

BILL. I live with you, wherever that is.

SUPT. (*to DAN*). Where do you live?

DAN. Oh, we live about ten miles out of town.

SUPT. As far as that?

BILL. Oh, it's further if you have to walk.

SUPT. You will have to move. I say, you'll have to move.

BILL. Yes, that's what the landlord told us this morning.

SUPT. You see, your duties will compel you to be up at four o'clock in the morning.

DAN. At four o'clock in the morning?

SUPT. Yes.

BILL. What time do we go to bed?

SUPT. At three.

DAN. At three in the afternoon?

SUPT. No, you idiot, at three in the morning.

BILL. Go to bed at three, and get up at four?

SUPT. Yes.

DAN. The same day?

SUPT. Yes, certainly. You have an hour to yourself.

BILL. Oh, we do? Yes, that's all right. I didn't know we had that hour. Dan, we have a whole hour.

SUPT. Yes, you have an hour.

BILL. I suppose if we wanted to use that hour you wouldn't find any fault?

SUPT. Oh, no; that hour belongs to you. However, if you wish to utilize that hour you might, just for a little gentle exercise, come around to my house and saw wood, or throw in coal.

BILL. Or make benzine for the benzine buggy.

DAN. Or wash off the car.

SUPT. I don't care.

BILL. Well, you may have that hour; I don't think we will get a chance to use it.

SUPT. When you get off your downy couches —

BILL. When we get down off our crutches?

SUPT. When you rise from your beds —

BILL. Do we ever strike a bed?

SUPT. When you get up at four o'clock, you take the car and run down-town with it. (DAN and BILL make a *rush as though to exit*, R.) Hold on there; where are you fellows going?

DAN. Say, boss, my friend ain't strong enough for this job.

BILL. My friend's feet's sore. He ain't strong enough to eat sirloin steak. We can't carry a car.

SUPT. You don't understand. You jump on your car at four o'clock in the morning. When you arrive at the end of the route¹ —

BILL. We go up the tree.

SUPT. No, there's a branch, and you are allowed three minutes for breakfast.

¹The word should be pronounced *roote*.

BILL. Oh, that's too much time, don't you think? I hate to waste time.

SUPT. You are also allowed three minutes for dinner, and three minutes for supper. Consequently you have one hour and nine minutes out of the twenty-four.

BILL. Oh, that's time enough. I suppose you wouldn't have any objection if we brought our meals and ate them on the car?

SUPT. Oh, no; that's a good idea, and we will adopt it.

BILL. Why couldn't we sleep on the car, and be there all the time?

SUPT. Certainly, if you turned the cushions over.

DAN. We'd have to, if we wanted to sleep.

SUPT. I'll give you each \$1.25 per day.

BILL. You mean real money?

SUPT. Yes.

BILL. We don't want any money. Just let us on the car.

DAN. We only want to handle the money a little while. Just to see how it feels, that's all.

SUPT. Well, boys, what do you say; will you take the situations?

BILL. We'll try them for a year, and at the end of that time if we don't like the jobs we'll quit.

SUPT. (to BILL). You'll be the chauffeur.

BILL. He says I'm to be the shover.

DAN. And I'm the pusher.

SUPT. No, you're to be the conductor.

DAN. Then who'll do the pushing?

SUPT. Oh, the crowd will do the pushing. (To BILL.) You must run the car (*and to DAN*) and you must collect the money from the passengers.

BILL. Good-day; I'm off.

SUPT. What's the matter now?

BILL. If he collects the money I see where I don't get a cent.

SUPT. Oh, yes you will. You see, he collects the money and hands it over to me, and then I pay you your wages.

DAN. You can pay Bill his wages, but never mind me. (Sings.) "I'll get mine, boys, I'll get mine."

SUPT. Now, boys, come here, and I'll give you your uniforms.

(*Gives DAN a very little coat, and BILL a very big one.*)

DAN. Oh, what a cute little seamore coat.

BILL. Well, we're in style, anyhow. Mine's a sheath gown.

SUPT. (to BILL). You will have to wear this.

(*Gives BILL a horse's bonnet.*)

BILL (*very indignant*). Sir ! The idocity ! Do you realize that this is for a horse ?

SUPT. Oh, that's all right. A jackass can wear it.

BILL. Then why don't you put it on ?

SUPT. You must also wear these goggles.

(*Hands him goggles.*)

BILL. What's that ? These gog-gog-les ? What's them for ?

SUPT. You put them on your eyes.

BILL. I can see all right. (*Puts them on.*) Say, mister, one of the windows is dirty. (*Puts on bonnet.*)

SUPT. Well, wash it.

DAN (*laughing at BILL*). He ! He ! He ! Bill, you look just like a donkey.

SUPT. And this is for you. (*Gives DAN a megaphone.*) It's to talk through. (*Shouts through it in DAN's ear.* DAN very much frightened. *Finally takes it from the SUPT. and shouts through it. Uses it as a telescope.*) Now before proceeding further in this business it will be requisite for you each to deposit ten dollars in the treasury of the company. (*Both start R., as though to exit.*) What's the matter ? Haven't you got ten dollars ?

BILL. Do we look as if we had ten dollars ?

DAN. Do you suppose if we had ten dollars we'd be looking for work ?

BILL. If we had ten dollars we'd be running our own auto.

SUPT. Oh, I see. You have been out of work so long that you are out of money. I'll advance you each ten dollars on your salaries. You will also set your watches by the clock in the church tower. (*Both start R. again.*) What's the matter now ?

BILL (*to DAN*). Show up, Dan.

SUPT. What ! No watches ?

BILL. We haven't been in the business long enough.

DAN. Just give us a load of passengers and we'll have all those things.

SUPT. Well, I'll lend you boys a couple of watches. Here they are.

(*Gives them each a little tape measure in a case. DAN pulls it out and lets it run back into the case. Sings, "He came right out and turned around and ran right back again."*)

DAN. Well, this is a mighty funny way to tell time—by inches. It's three-quarters of a yard past nine.

SUPT. Now, boys, you are all right. Here are your orders which I want strictly enforced. Don't allow any smoking on the car, and be sure and collect all the fares. No drunks, no bundles, no babies —

BILL. How about dogs?

SUPT. Oh, dogs are all right. Now get on your jobs and let me have a good report of you when you come in to-night.

(*Exit SUPT., L.*)

(*BILL gets on front seat, and DAN gets on back of car with megaphone, and shouts, "All aboard for New York, Chelsea, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco."*)

BILL (*very much excited*). Hold on there, Dan, you're going too far; this car only goes as far as — (name of local place or near-by town).

(*They make believe to start the car. Great noise of yelping from under the car.*)

DAN (*from back seat, using megaphone as telescope*). What's all the noise, Bill? What's the trouble down there?

BILL. Oh, nothing; I just ran over a sausage, that's all.

(*Enter FAT LADY, r., very gaily dressed. DAN and BILL rush after her.*)

DAN. She's mine; I saw her first.

BILL. No, she's mine; I'm running this car.

DAN. I'm the conductor; I collect the fares.

BILL. All right, you can have her, but the next one's mine.

(FAT LADY sits on bench near by. DAN goes over and sits beside her. She moves nearer to him.)

DAN. You're looking lovely to-day.

FAT LADY. Am I? Flatterer!

(She moves nearer to him. DAN nearly crowded off bench. BILL peeks around edge of seat to watch them.)

DAN. Yes. You're looking simply immense!

FAT LADY. Sir!

DAN (hastily). I mean, there's a great deal about you to admire. (FAT LADY looks pleased. She crowds up close to DAN, who is forced off the bench. He gets up limping.) Wouldn't you like to take a ride this morning? (He goes on in the monotonous, mechanical tone of the professional guide.) We-will-show-you-all-the-sights-of-this-great-city—its-palaces-its-busy-marts-of-trade—its-stately-avenues-and-pleasant-parks—its—

FAT LADY (gushingly). Oh, I'd just love to go.

(She pushes forward to the automobile.)

DAN. One moment, please. Allow me.

(He takes tape measure from pocket. BILL comes down and takes out his tape measure. They measure the FAT LADY, then look at each other and shake their heads.)

BILL (aside). It's no use. (Aloud.) Madam, do you want to go to-day, right away?

FAT LADY. Certainly!

BILL (draws out piece of paper, and writes on it). All right. (He hands DAN the paper.) Conductor, take this lady over to the freight department and put her in a car. There's your bill of lading.

FAT LADY (indignantly). Freight!

DAN (reads from paper). Fragile. Handle carefully!

FAT LADY. Freight! I suppose you want to put me on a cattle-car. Freight, indeed! Well, I like that!

BILL. Conductor, the lady says she prefers a cattle-car.

(Exit FAT LADY, indignantly, r. BILL and DAN run after her as though to call her back. They stand looking r.)

(Enter TRAMP, l. He is smoking a cigar. He climbs upon

the car and seats himself, still smoking. BILL and DAN turn and see him.)

DAN. Hey there, you bum; you can't smoke on this car. (TRAMP takes no notice; goes on smoking.) Hey, Bill, here's a man smoking on the car.

BILL. What? Smoking on this car? The idocity! Sir, you cannot smoke on this car. Throw that cigar away, immediately.

(TRAMP makes believe to throw cigar away. Both BILL and DAN make a rush for it.)

TRAMP (to BILL). Do you smoke?

BILL. Yes. (Climbs on car.)

TRAMP. Here's a cigar. (Gives BILL a cigar. DAN holds his hand out for cigar. TRAMP flicks some ashes on it. DAN makes believe to be burned.) Do you smoke?

DAN. Sure! (Climbs on car, expecting cigar.)

TRAMP. Well, here's a match.

(BILL and DAN get down off car.)

BILL. Give us a light, Dan.

DAN. Yes, but—what do I get?

BILL. Butt—you can have the butt.

(DAN lights match. BILL holds cigar. DAN lights cigar, which goes off with a bang. TRAMP jumps down off car; exit, L. BILL and DAN chase him toward L., then turn back to car.)

(Enter JEW, L., carrying a cane, and wearing a long-tailed coat.)

JEW. I want to go to Salem Shtreet.

(DAN and BILL turn and rush toward him as though thinking he is the TRAMP. They stop suddenly.)

DAN. Oh, excuse me. Get right aboard. We'll take you to Jerusalem if you want to go there.

BILL. You'd better get his fare first, Dan.

(As the JEW steps on the car BILL rolls his coat tails upon his back, so that when he sits down and tries to lift his coat tails, he can't find them. He tries to reach them

with his hands, and even uses his cane. At last he locates them and sits down.)

DAN. Fare, please.

JEW. Vat sages du ?

(Several sentences of Yiddish or what sounds like it may be put in here. The JEW at last gives DAN a transfer ticket.)

DAN. This transfer is no good on this car.

JEW. No goot on dis car ? A car is a car, ain'd it ?

DAN. But this transfer is for a ride on the trolley cars.

JEW *(cheerfully)*. Oh, I don'd care. A car is a car, ain'd it ? It makes no difference to me. I'm villing to ride mit you. A car is a car.

DAN *(to BILL)*. This man has given me a transfer.

BILL. What ? A transfer ? The idocity ! Put him off, Dan ; put him off.

JEW. A car is a car, ain'd it ? Vell, I'll ride mit you ; I don'd care.

DAN. See here, old man, this transfer is three days old. *(To BILL.)* Bill, this transfer is three days old.

BILL. What ? Three days old ? The idocity ! Put him off the car. *(To JEW.)* What do you mean by giving my conductor a transfer three days old ? *(Rolling up sleeves.)*

JEW. I can't help it if the car is tree days behind time, can I ? A car is a car, dot's all.

(Loud creaking sound under the car. BILL and DAN jump down to see what is the matter. BILL gets under the car and comes out with his face and hands covered with oil.)

BILL. Hey there, Isaac, this car is not going to-day, so you had better get off. Take a trolley.

JEW. Oh, all right. A car is a car.

(Exit JEW, L.)

(Enter FAIR LADY, R. BILL and DAN both make a rush for her.)

DAN. She's mine, Bill, I'm the conductor.

BILL. Oh, no, she's mine, Dan, you had the last one. Ain't she sweet ?

(FAIR LADY gives DAN a very sour look.)

DAN. Oh, I don't know. All right, Bill, you can have her.

BILL. Good-morning. We are offering some lovely patterns in automobile rides this morning. Can't I show you some?

FAIR LADY. Why, I guess so.

BILL. Right this way. Elevator to second floor. Unusually fine weather we're having. (*Assists FAIR LADY into middle seat of car, and climbs into front seat. DAN gets into back seat.*) All aboard. Here we go.

(*Pretends to start machine.*)

DAN. Fare, lady.

FAIR LADY. Oh, yes, all the boys say I'm fair, but you ought to see me when I'm dressed up. I have the sweetest little frock of pink voile, made directoire, cut quite décolleté, you know, and trimmed with Valenciennes lace around the —

DAN (*interrupting her by putting out hand*). Fare, lady; I want money.

FAIR LADY. Oh, I'm so sorry, but I haven't any change.

DAN (*to BILL*). Here's a lady who won't pay her fare.

BILL. What? Won't pay her fare? What does she think I took her for? The idocy! Lady, you must pay your fare.

FAIR LADY. All right; but you boys must look the other way.

(*Takes money from her stocking.*)

DAN (*calling out*). On the right is —— (*names local building*) the greatest—etc., etc.

FAIR LADY. Stop the car, boys, here's where I get out.

(*Exit, r.*)

(*Enter FARMER, L.*)

FARMER. Where's this car going?

DAN. It's not going! It's standing still.

FARMER (*reads sign on car, "Sight-Seeing Car"*). What part of the city will I see? (*Climbs aboard the car.*)

DAN. Any part you look at.

(*DAN puts out his hand for fare. FARMER shakes it.*)

FARMER. Oh, how d'ye do?

DAN. Fare.

FARMER. That's good. How's your ma?

DAN. Fare.

FARMER. That's good. How's all the rest of the folks?

DAN (*to BILL*). Bill, here's a rube who won't pay his fare.

BILL. What? Won't pay his fare? The idocity! Hey there, you rube, pay the conductor his fare or I'll throw you off.

FARMER. All right, here it is. Why didn't you ask for it? Here's a ten dollar bill, and, by gum, I want my change.

DAN (*takes money*). This car don't make any change, and we need the money.

FARMER. By gum, I want my change, or I'll have the law on ye.

DAN. Here, Bill, I've got ten dollars. (*Tears it in halves.*) Five for you and five for me.

FARMER. By gum, I'll have the law on ye. Where's the perlice?

(FARMER exits L., looking for police.)

BILL. We better get out of this right quick.

(They climb on car, and BILL makes motions of starting in a hurry. There is a loud squeaking, creaking noise under car.)

DAN. There, smarty, now you've done it. I'll bet you've jammed the carburetor into the differential calculus. Some people are so careless. (BILL climbs down, takes candle from car and lights it, and goes under car.) Hey, come away from that gasoline tank! (BILL comes up, and leans over into car. He lights firecrackers and throws them into can.) Look out, there!

(As firecrackers explode, DAN and BILL jump high in air and fall flat.)

(Enter CRIPPLE on crutches, bandages on head, etc.)

BILL (*groans*). Oh, my, it's Dan's ghost. He's dead, Dan is. It's his ghost. (Sees DAN sitting up.) Oh, Dan, there's your ghost.

DAN. Not on your life. (*Gets up and grabs CRIPPLE, rushing him toward car.*) This way for the dead ones. All aboard for the cemetery. Step lively, please.

(BILL gets up on front seat.)

BILL. Well, well, don't take all day. You must be from _____ (*names town near by*). Hey there, what's the matter with you?

CRIPPLE. I'm a very sick man.

BILL. Sick? You're dead, and you don't know it.

CRIPPLE. I was a big man once—weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. Now I only weigh fifty pounds. (*Noises in the wings—calls and bells.*) What's that noise I hear?

BILL. Oh, those are the angels calling you. How did you get so broken up?

CRIPPLE. I used to run that machine. (*To BILL.*) I had your job.

BILL (*frightened*). Wh-what's that?

DAN (*laughing*). Oh, Bill, you see what those careless, naughty ways of yours are going to do to you.

BILL (*to CRIPPLE*). Say, where's the man who had this job before you?

CRIPPLE. Oh, he was smashed up. The automobile turned turtle.

DAN (*nervously*). Say, wh-what became of the conductor?

CRIPPLE. Why, he was flattened out so thin he slipped into a crack of the pavement, and they never found him.

DAN (*to CRIPPLE*). There, run along. You make me so nervous.

(*Exit CRIPPLE, r.*)

(*Enter SUPT., l., and comes to c. DAN is r., and BILL, l.*)

SUPT. Well, how did you make out, boys? How many fares have you taken in?

DAN. How many passengers have we taken in?

SUPT. No; how much money have you taken in?

DAN (*pretends to write on slate. Wets fingers and pretends to rub it out, then writes again*). About forty-two cents.

SUPT. What! about forty-two cents? (*To BILL.*) How many passengers did you have?

(DAN makes signs to BILL.)

BILL. We had five passengers ; no, four and a half ; one was a cripple.

SUPT. And you have only taken in forty-two cents ? This won't do. You must charge every person who gets on that car one dollar ; do you hear, one dollar. And look here, remember this. Don't fail to charge yourself with a dollar every time you get on the car.

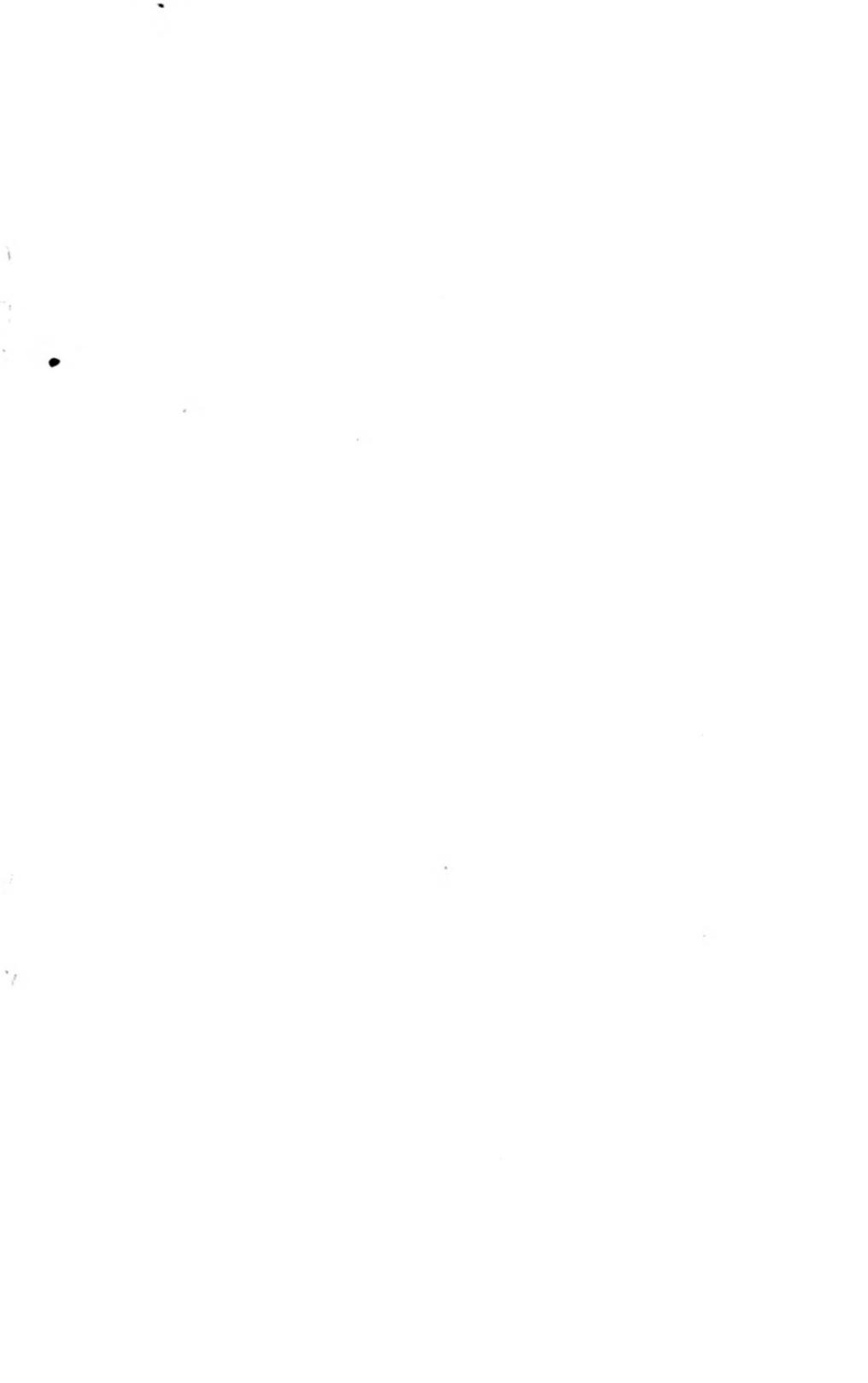
DAN (*with freezing politeness*). Oh, certainly. Oh, I just remember, my wife needs me at home.

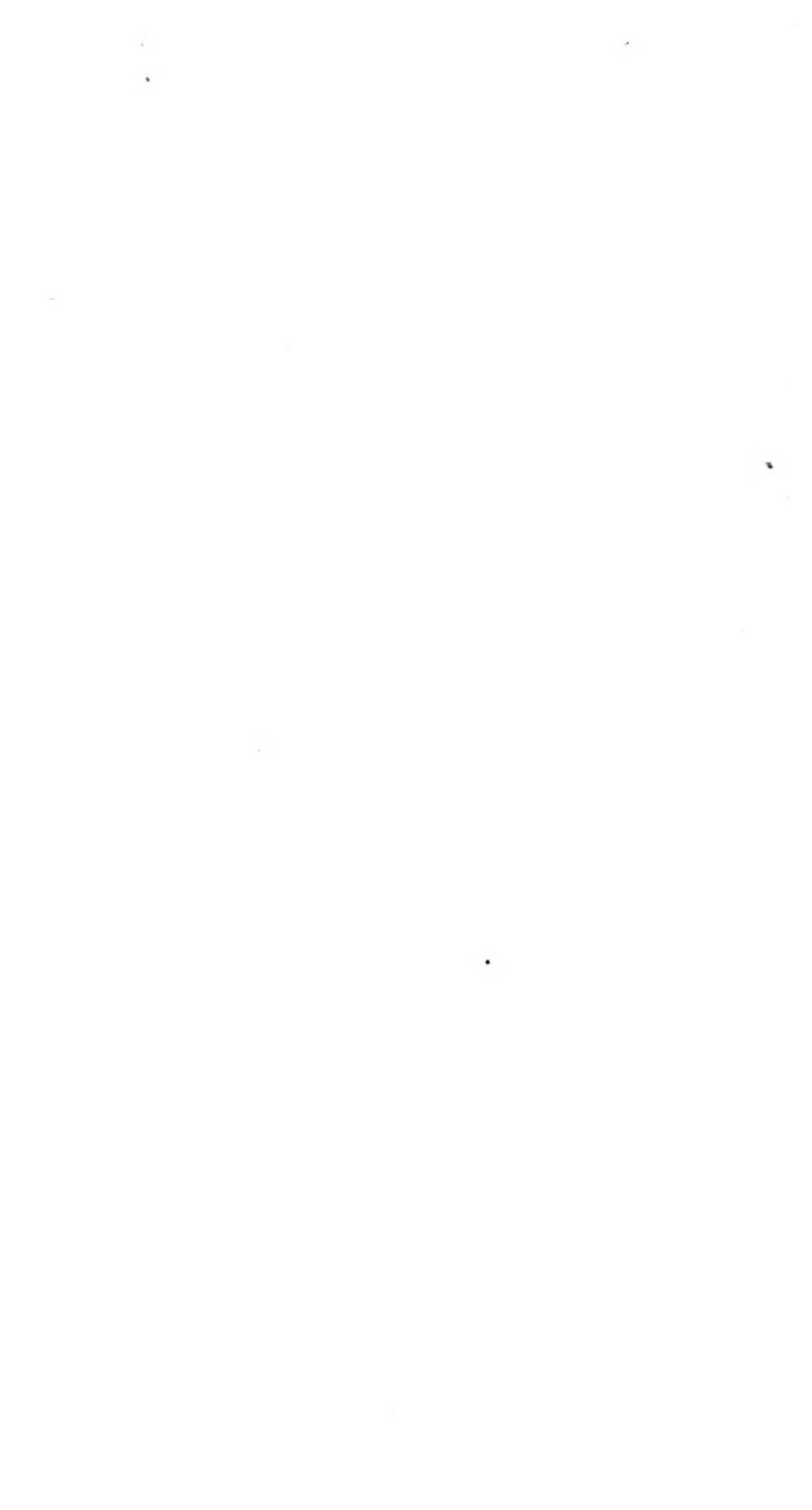
BILL. Well, I guess I owe you about forty-'leven dollars already.

SUPT. Oh, that's all right ; come along with me ; it's twelve o'clock, and you have three minutes to eat. Will you lunch with me ?

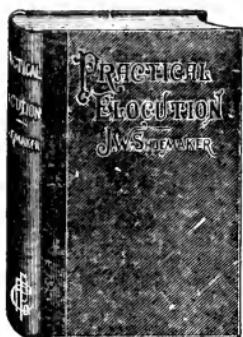
DAN } (rushing to him and squeezing up affectionately on
BILL } either side of him). Lunch ! Will I ?

CURTAIN





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